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REMARKS

STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

Claims 14-25 are pending in the application.

Claims 14, 21, 22, and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite.

Pending claims are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Yoshida et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,130,757).

According to the foregoing, claim 25 is cancelled without disclaimer or prejudice, the claims are amended, and, thus, the pending claims remain for reconsideration, which is respectfully requested.

No new matter has been added.

IN THE SPECIFICATION

The Office Action page 2, items 6 and 7, suggest the specification, drawings, and the claims should be proofread for grammatical and idiomatic errors.

37 CFR 1.125(a) provides that a substitute specification might be required "[i]f the number or nature of the amendments or the legibility of the application papers renders it difficult to consider the application ...." However, upon a review of the specification, and in view of the Examiner not specifying any grammatical and/or idiomatic errors, it is respectfully asserted that the specification uses proper idiomatic English sentences and the specification is not difficult to consider. Further, according to the foregoing, the claims have been amended taking into consideration the Examiner's comments. Therefore, a substitute specification requirement is not appropriate, and withdrawal of any objection to the specification is respectfully requested.

35 USC 112, SECOND PARAGRAPH, REJECTION

The Office Action page 3, items 8-13 reject independent claims 14, 21, 22, and 24 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, for being indefinite as indicated. According to the foregoing, the claims are amended taking into consideration the Examiner's comments. Withdrawal of the indefiniteness rejection is respectfully requested.

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35 USC 102 REJECTION

Pending claims are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Yoshida et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,130,757).

Independent claims 14 and 21-24, using claim 14 as an example, are amended as follows:

14.   (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A server connected with a plurality of multifunction machines via a network, the server comprising:

a plurality of functions;

a plurality of request processing units in communication with the functions and processing functionthat process requests received from at least one of the multifunction machines to execute the functions;

an assigning unit that assigns one of the request processing unitunits to thea multifunction machine based on thea connection request from the multifunction machine, and sends a completion-of-assignment notification to the multifunction machine, the completion-of-assignment notification indicating that processing of the a function request is possible, wherein the request processing unit controls executing the function according to a function command received from the assigned multifunction machine;

an assignment canceling unit that cancels the assignment of the request processing unit to the multifunction machine, when the command of the function the request is not received from the assigned multifunction machine within a predetermined amount of time; and

an information recorder that has multifunction connection information, the multifunction connection information having information indicative of whether the multifunction machine is acceptable to be in an operable state in linkage with the server, wherein the connection request from the multifunction machine is receivedassigned to the request processing unit in the assigning based on the multifunction connection information.

15. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The server according to claim 14, wherein the completion-of-assignment notification has information of athe function, and the function is processable by the server.

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16. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The server according to claim 14, ~~the server further comprising:~~

wherein the function is a fax that faxes image ~~data;~~data, and

wherein the request processing unit controls the fax and sends the image data received from the multifunction machine, when the request processing unit receives from the multifunction machine ~~the request~~ a fax command as the function command to fax the image data~~from the multifunction machine~~.

For example, the present Application page 30, line 16 to page 32, line 11; page 41, line 6 to page 42, line 18; and page 46, lines 2-12 support the claim amendments.

In particular, FIG. 2's "functions" 44-48 (fax, print, etc.) correspond to *a plurality of functions.*

And FIG. 2's child processors 42 can correspond as an example to the claimed "a plurality of request processing units *in communication with the functions [e.g., a fax function 44] and processing function*~~that process~~ *requests received from at least one of the multifunction machines.*"

And FIG. 2's parent operation management 41 can correspond as an example to the claimed "an assigning unit that *assigns one of the request processing ~~unit~~units to the*~~a~~ *multifunction machine* based on ~~the~~a connection request from the multifunction machine, and sends a completion-of-assignment notification to the multifunction machine,~~the completion-of-assignment notification~~ indicating that processing of ~~the~~a function request is possible, *wherein the request processing unit controls executing the function [e.g., a fax function 44] according to a function command* received *from the assigned multifunction machine.*"

Yoshida columns 2-3 (column 2, line 66+) discuss "a server apparatus ... executing a job requested by the plurality of client apparatuses, ... a job management unit for managing jobs requested by the plurality of client apparatuses by assigning priorities to the jobs each time a job is requested, and a job controlling unit for searching a job having a highest priority at intervals and executing the job." Yoshida column 4, lines 30-32 discuss "Copying machines 1, 4, and 6, image scanner 2, PC 3, and facsimile machine 5 provide, as server apparatuses their functions to other apparatuses in the network."

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However, a prima facie case of anticipation based upon Yoshida cannot be established, because Yoshida fails to disclose, either expressly or inherently (by necessarily providing), each and every element of the claimed present invention, since Yoshida's job and job assignment in a server differs from the claimed present invention's server comprising "*a plurality of functions; a plurality of request processing units in communication with the functions [e.g., a fax function 44] and processing function*that process *requests* received from at least one of the multifunction machines *to execute the functions*; an assigning unit that *assigns one of the request processing unit*units *to* the*a multifunction machine based on* the*a connection request from the multifunction machine*, and sends a completion-of-assignment notification to the multifunction machine, the completion-of-assignment notification indicating that processing of the-*a* function request is possible, *wherein the request processing unit controls executing the function [e.g., a fax function 44] according to a function command received from the assigned multifunction machine*."

In other words, Yoshida's job assignment differs from the claimed present invention's "*request processing units in communication with the functions [e.g., a fax function 44] and processing function*that process *requests ... [and being] assign[ed to] ...* the*a connection request from the multifunction machine*," since Yoshida's job ID in FIG. 20 (see page 5 of the Office Action) differs from "*[a] request processing unit in communication with [a] function [e.g., a fax function 44] and processing [a] function request ... to execute the function ... ,wherein the request processing unit controls executing the function [e.g., a fax function 44] according to a function command received from the assigned multifunction machine*." See, for example, amended dependent claim 16, in which a request processing unit controls a fax function by reciting "*wherein the function is a fax* that faxes image data;*data, and* wherein *the request processing unit controls the fax* and sends the image data received from the multifunction machine, *when the request processing unit receives from the multifunction machine the request*a fax command as the function command *to fax* the image data*from the multifunction machine*."

A job identifier does not process a function request, but is an identifier assigned to a job. Further, Yoshida is silent on its job configuration and execution, so Yoshida fails to disclose or suggest to one skilled in the art to modify Yoshida's job assignment to provide the claimed present invention's "*a plurality of request processing units in communication with the*

functions [e.g., a fax function 44] and *processing function*that process *requests* received from at least one of the multifunction machines *to execute the functions*; an assigning unit that assigns *one of the request processing* unit*units* to the*a* multifunction machine based on the*a connection* request *from the multifunction machine, wherein the request processing unit controls executing the function [e.g., a fax function 44] according to a function command received from the assigned multifunction machine*." The claimed present invention's "*request processing units in communication with the functions [e.g., a fax function 44]* and *processing function*that process *requests ... to execute the functions*" correspond to the child processing sections 42 that are communicably connectable to the "*functions*" 44-48 shown in FIG. 2, which Yoshida fails to disclose or suggest to one skilled in the art to modify the same to achieve.

Further, in contrast to Yoshida, the claimed present invention provides a new and non-obvious effect of efficiently managing "*assigns one of the request processing* unit*units* to the*a multifunction machine based on* the*a connection* request *from the multifunction machine*" by "*cancels the assignment of the request processing unit to the multifunction machine, when the command of the function* the request*is not received from the assigned multifunction machine within a predetermined amount of time*." The Office Action page 5 relies on Yoshida, FIGS. 11-13, col. 2 line 22 to col. 3, line 17, to meet this claimed feature, however, FIGS. 11-13 appear to discuss a job delete function, which differs from releasing "*request processing units in communication with the functions [e.g., a fax function 44]* and *processing function* that process *requests ... to execute the functions*" at the server after a connection request has been accepted with the multifunction machine, if a function command has not been received from the multifunction machine for a period of time.

In view of the claim amendments and remarks, it is believed the claims are now in condition for allowance over the relied upon references, which is respectfully requested.
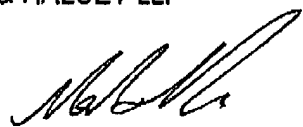
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CONCLUSION

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

Respectfully submitted,
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Date: _July 18, 2006_

By: _____

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